"You won't be let to take him."

"Ain't she the old girl for keepin' track of company's rules?" laughed Bill. A spluttering and a splashing from the inner room soon told that the engineer was "cleaning himself."

"Set up, Mr. Martin," invited Mrs. Bill, coming in from the kitchen, "set up. Ain't no sense waitin' on Mr. Mo'head whilst hoe-cakes is hot. Set up, ma."

"I ain't got no stomach for vittles tonight, Mag."

"What's ailin'? Want yo' bitters?"

"I got bitters enough."

"When Bill comes he'll make yuh set up. Just yuh wait. Long sweetin' or short, Mr. Martin?"

"I'll have syrup," answered Chris, as Bill reappeared.

"Why ain't yuh settin' up, ma?" he asked.

"I ain't feelin' to."

"Feelin'll come with feedin'." He picked the old woman up, chair and all, and put her in her place at table. "Now," he said, "all we want is little Bill."

They ate without conversation, as country people do, Chris taking furtive glances at his paper. The news of the great impending railroad strike was disquieting. Chris knew that Morehead had later and more accurate news of the situation than his day old paper—and he knew that Bill would impart little of his information. But Bill surprised him.

"Anything special callin' you home before Labor day, Mr. Martin?" he asked.

"You don't mean—?"

"Course, walkin's good for them as don't mind. We ain't wantin' to get shed of you; but there'll probably be things doin', Labor day."

"You mean nothing doing?" asked Chris.

Bill nodded gravely.

"Air the strike order out?" wailed old Mrs. Morehead.

"Yes, ma—for next Monday. Tomorrow's papers'll have it."

"Yuh say the government's with yuh: what's Wilson doin'?"

"All he can, ma. He may fix it yet."

"I don't see why you railroad boys don't help the president out," said Chris; "all the managers ask is arbitration."

"We ain't fightin' the managers," responded Bill; "we're fightin' their owners—the managers can't help themselves, they're bought. They're playin' for arbitration now like we boys played for it an' couldn't get it. When we did get it they stacked the cards, and they didn't live up to their own rules. Arbitration, when it's square, is all right—it can't be done square with the crowd we're up against."

"But, Bill!" protested his anxious-eyed wife.

"I know what you're wantin' to say, Mag, an' I know how ma's feelin'. I got a good run an' good pay' an' I'm satisfied with my job; but some of the boys ain't got what I got. It's stickin' together as does it. If the brotherhood goes out, Bill Morehead goes with them."

"But," interposed Chris, "you engineers, conductors and trainmen are the best paid and most comfortably placed men on the job. And you're a minority. How about the clerks and all the rest of the boys who work for small pay?"

"They needn't," retorted Bill. "We're workin' for them's well as ourselves, showin' them the way. So long's they don't organize and fight for what's comin' to 'em honest, they'll be starved. There's nothin' cheaper'n men an' nothin' dearer than everything men need these days. You ain't forgettin' the pay of the presidents, vice-presidents, managers and lawyers, air you?"

"But think of the years of education the lawyers have to have, and the cost of it," said Chris.

"I do," responded Bill. "Did you ever think of the schoolin' an engineer has to have, an' the cost of it? Take me. It cost me the chance of book schoolin'; first a boy in the yards, then tendin' switch an' brakes, then firin', then my engine. I pull down about eighteen hundred a year; our head lawyer on the P. D. & M. makes fifty thousand in poor years. He don't earn it; he's a fancy man. When I pull out "Forty-six" full of passengers, I got more responsibility to bear than all the railroad lawyers in the country. I ain't kickin', but I'm just sayin' what's so. You notice the managers say if the men get what they're askin' it'll cost the roads betwixt fifty and a hundred million, an' that the people'll have to foot the bill—"

"Well, won't they?" interrupted Chris.

"Have you heard a word about cuttin' dividends?" was Bill's answering question. "I ain't heard nothin' along that line nor seen it in print. Dividends is too holy to peel for expenses."

"A good many people would suffer if dividends were cut," said Chris.

"Yuh ain't goin' to spring them old widders and orphans on me, air you? Why, most of the stock and bond holdin' widders ride in automobiles an' the orphans go to swell colleges. Poor folks can't buy stocks and bonds and hold 'em for income. You know's well's I do who the dividend takers are an' how they spend the money. Let them as takes the profit of labor do without some o' the things they don't need, an' foot the bill. They ain't no call for but one class of people in the country to pay it—an' they can pay without sufferin'. A man like me has to work a long time before he gets his engine an' then his time for runnin' it ain't none too long. He's got to keep in condition; a glass of booze on the job'd queer him."

"Yuh always said no engineer had ought to drink, Bill," urged his wife.

"An' I say so yet. He hadn't orter—never! But them as manages us sits down to banquets an' boozes whilst they're managin'. I ain't kickin', I tell you—what's so's so. Why, fine old engineers that have to wear specs, stand to lose their jobs. We have to go through all sorts of feelin's an' pokin's, special 'bout our eyes. If I was to say this room wasn't papered red—"

Bill's old mother dropped her pipe to the floor; Mrs. Bill gave a little cry of anguish.

"Why, what's ailin' you all?" asked Bill. "What's ailin', Mr. Martin?"

"The wallpaper is green, Bill."

"You lie!"

"Oh, Bill, Mr. Martin is right/" cried his wife.

"An' you say it's green too, Mag?"

"Yes, Bill."

"Ma, yo' eyes is best—if they air old."

"It's green, Bill,—greener'n grass."

"An' I see it red. My God!"

The big fellow buried his head in his arms and would not be comforted, though his mother and his wife were giving him what comfort they could. Bill was color blind. He never would pull out "Forty-six again. Chris saw a heart breaking.

Christopher went out under the stars—he could not remain, it seemed indecent to do so. He tramped the hills until morning and not once did he see any face but that of Bill Morehead; her face not at all. Real trouble had driven out the trouble of his vain imagining, had made him see what trouble was. He was cured.—St. Louis Mirror.

HAD TO OBEY ORDERS

An old colored uncle was found by the preacher prowling in his barnyard late one night.

"Uncle Calhoun," said the preacher sternly, "it can't be good for your rheumatism to be prowling round here in the rain and cold."

"Doctor's orders, sah," the old man answered.

"Doctor's orders?" said the preacher. "Did he tell you to go prowling round all night?"

"No, sah, not exactly, sah," said Uncle Cal; "but he done ordered me chicken broth."—Sacramento Bee.

GRAY SNOW

By Albert W. Tolman.

THE officer of the deck, Lieutenant Preston, saluted as he entered the chart room to make his report to Captain Edwards.

"All accounted for, sir, except the prize crew and the Japs aboard the Hakodate Maru."

Dong—dong—dong—dong—dong!

The bell of the little Russian Greek church, ringing fast and incessantly, pealed through the rain of volcanic ashes. Father Kirk Kashiveroff was calling his flock to prayer.

The United States revenue cutter Walrus, with steam up, ready to go to sea, lay at the wharf of the Alaskan cannery town of St. Andrew, on Kodiak island. Mount Katmai, almost one hundred miles off on the mainland, was in eruption, and for two days its ashes, driven by a strong northwest wind, had been falling on St. Andrew.

Streets were blocked; roofs were cracking under their increasing burden. The gray dust had choked the harbor and stopped the run of salmon up the little river. Work at the cannery had ceased, and most of the four hundred residents had taken refuge on the Walrus and in the shed on the adjoining wharf.

It was after ten o'clock in the morning when Preston made his report to the captain, but day had not dawned at all. Not a glimmer of light broke the dead and impenetrable blackness that had blotted out the June morning. And still the ashes fell. The air reeked with sulphurous fumes. Frequent avalanches, sending up thick, suffocating clouds of dust, rushed and rumbled down the steep hillsides into the harbor.

Since early morning all hands on the Walrus had been busy with shovels and corn brooms, striving to keep the ship clear of ashes. Temporary shelters built of board and canvas housed the refugees and gave the exhausted, blind workers an occasional respite.

At eleven o'clock the captain determined to make one more attempt with the wireless.

"Tell the operator to try to raise Unalaska," he ordered Preston.

The lieutenant soon returned. "Radio is dumb, sir. Too much static."

There was no sign of the eruption's abating. To remain meant death, perhaps, for everyone in St. Andrew.

"Get the ship ready for sea," Captain Edwards commanded. "Tell the people on the wharf to come aboard and send a man up to the church to notify Father Kashiveroff."

Anchored off the cannery, a half mile westward, lay a Japanese schooner, the Hakodate Maru, which the revenue cutter had seized a few days before, because it had found one of her boats inside the three-mile limit and on board it a sea otter, recently shot, worth two thousand dollars. That was a serious offense, for the closed time for those animals would not expire until 1920.

The captain of the poacher and his two mates were confined on the Walrus. Second Lieutenant Brigham, Gunner Pease and two seamen formed the prize crew in charge of the Hakodate Maru and of the thirty Japanese who remained on board. The schooner lay less than three thousand feet away, but the cutter had not seen or heard from her for more than twenty-four hours.

In a few minutes Preston returned.

"It's no use to send a boat after Brigham," said the captain. "In this darkness it would be a hard job to find the schooner and get back safely. Besides, the boat would fill up with dust. The Hakodate could never get under way and beat out. The only thing to do is to get our men and the Japs ashore and bring 'em back to the cutter. It's death to everyone if we stop much longer."

"Let me make up a party and go after them!" exclaimed Preston eagerly.

"All right. Call for volunteers."

(Continued on page 11.)